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THE  
YEAR OF JUBILEE;

BUT NOT TO AFRICANS :

**A Discourse,**

DELIVERED JULY 4TH, 1825,

BEING THE 49TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

—  
BY NATHANIEL S. PRIME,

*Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, in Cambridge, N. Y.*

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SALEM, N. Y.

PRINTED BY DODD AND STEVENSON.

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## TO THE READER.

Though no apology for the present publication, or for the form in which it appears, will be attempted, yet it may not be improper or uninteresting to state a few facts relating to its origin.

The author has been in the habit, for a number of years past, of celebrating the anniversary of our Independence with public worship in his own congregation. Previous to the last 4th of July, notice to that effect was given, and at the same time it was stated that the subject of discourse would be—not American *Liberty*, but—American *Slavery*: in connexion with which, the object and operations of “*The American Colonization Society*” would be brought into view, and its claims upon publick patronage defended and urged. A similar notice was sent to the other congregations in this place with an invitation to attend.

To a very respectable audience, thus convened, the following discourse was delivered, and a contribution taken up in aid of the Colonization Society.

At the close of the service, a meeting was organized, of which the following are the minutes:

“*The Hon. John M'Lean, was chosen Chairman, and Gerrit Wendell, Secretary.*

“*The following resolutions were then unanimously adopted.*

“*Resolved, That it is expedient and proper, in the view of this meeting, hereafter to celebrate the anniversary of our National Independence with religious exercises.*

“*Resolved, That Messrs. John Ashton, Sidney Wells and Dr. Matthew Stevenson be a committee to make arrangements for the next anniversary, by designating the place of meeting, and procuring a speaker for the occasion.*”

“*On motion of Mr. Ashton, seconded by Sidney Wells,—Resolved that the Rev. Mr. Prime be requested to furnish for the press, a copy of the Address delivered by him this day, and that the above mentioned committee be authorized to adopt the necessary measures to procure its publication*”

Although the proposal of the last resolution was totally unexpected to the author, yet he is willing frankly to acknowledge that its adoption was extremely grateful to his feelings; not only as an explicit approval of the sentiments which had been delivered, expressed by many of his own congregation and others, whose judgment he highly reveres; but also as affording the sanction of their authority in proclaiming them to the world. And, that it might have the full influence of that authority, the address is printed, with the exception of a few verbal corrections, and the addition of two notes, precisely as it was delivered.

The author cannot say that the views exhibited are the result of any new convictions in his own mind. Though he was familiar with slavery from his birth, yet from his earliest recollection, it was revolting to his feelings; and the first emotion of humanity that left an indelible impression on his memory, was that of commiseration for the degraded condition of a negro child about two years younger than himself; and from that moment, he never felt at rest on the subject, till the last vestige of the evil was removed from his parental dwelling. The same sentiments with respect to the universal guilt, and consequent danger of the American people, he has entertained ever since he became acquainted with the institutions of his country, and has occasionally exhibited them; but he acknowledges himself highly censurable in not having more frequently and pointedly urged them. He therefore presents this address to the publick, not only in compliance with the wishes of those whom he cannot refuse, but as a small atonement for having so often neglected to employ his pen, and raise his voice against an evil so extensive in its operation, and so alarming in its consequences.

Cambridge, July 5th, 1825.

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## A DISCOURSE, &c.

THE words from which I propose to address you, on this occasion, you will find recorded in "The DECLARATION of the INDEPENDENCE of the UNITED STATES of AMERICA ;"—the first clause after the preamble.

The words are these :

" *We hold these truths to be self-evident ; that all men are created equal ; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights ; that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.*"

Man, considered as a rational and social being, occupies a variety of important relations in the universe of God. In the first place he stands related to that great and glorious Being who gave him existence, and he is under the most solemn and indissoluble obligations, to the exercise of eternal reverence, love and gratitude. However indifferent he may feel, in his present fallen state, to the demands of heaven, and however negligent he may be of the duties which result from those demands, it is an incontrovertible truth, that the service of God has the first and highest claim. Hence, the first and greatest commandment of the law is declared, by the divine Saviour to be this ; "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.*" Mark xii. 30. An immediate and constant compliance with this precept should be the first object of every human being.

But although this is the first, it is not the only duty of man. He occupies other relations, and, of course, is subjected to the authority of other duties. Passing over all the other subordinate connexions of man, as foreign from our present purpose, I shall here notice only his relation to his own species, and the obligations which result from that relation. All men are formed by the same hand, born into the same world, under the same circumstances, and are bound by considerations both of duty and interest to respect each other's rights, and to promote each other's happiness. These duties are next in importance to those which relate to God.

Therefore, our blessed Lord, after declaring the precept already quoted to be the first commandment of the law, adds, "And the second is like" to it, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" He then declares, with respect to both, "There is no commandment greater than these." Here then we have a concise, but complete exposition of man's duty in relation to his own species. It is applicable to all the possible circumstances of life; and at the same time, so plain, that the smallest share of intellect is sufficient to understand and apply it. It accords precisely with that golden rule which the Saviour delivered, in his sermon on the mount; "*All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.*" Matthew vii. 12. That is, all the duties which God has ever required of man in relation to his own species, either in the law or the prophets, are comprehended in this single precept, *Do to others just as you would wish them to do to you.* Did this principle regulate the conduct of all men, the earth would instantly resume the first bloom of Eden. Not only would war, and murder and rapine cease to desolate the earth, but animosities and contention and oppression of every kind and degree would instantly disappear. Adventitious circumstances might still produce distinctions in the relative situations of men; but pride, that fiend of hell and enemy of happiness, would be banished from the human breast; and one more prospered of heaven than his fellows, would look down upon them, not to despise their poverty, nor to rejoice in their misery, nor to deprive them of their *liberty*; (the last earthly blessing that man can lose;) but to compassionate their necessities, to console them under adversity, and to administer to their relief. The whole human family would be bound together by the sense of a common nature, and the bonds of sincere affection: in a word, they would feel that they were *bone of each other's bone; and flesh of each other's flesh;* and in all cases, and under all circumstances, they would act like *brethren.*

From these remarks, you will perceive that the words of my text, although they are not a part of the

inspired volume, contain sentiments in perfect accordance with the divine declarations. This consideration therefore is sufficient to entitle them to the highest respect. But, in this favoured land, they do not need this argument to give them authority. They are the words of our *fathers*; not spoken by the fireside, or in the closet, while they rested quietly in the midst of their domestick circles, without a witness of their declarations; but proclaimed and published to the whole world, while they stood in jeopardy of their lives and all that they held dear on earth; and with a solemn appeal to the SUPREME JUDGE of the world for the rectitude of [their] intentions. Nay, more; some of them sealed this declaration with their own blood, and voluntarily laid down their lives, to deliver their posterity from tyranny and oppression, and to procure for them the blessings of *liberty* and self-government. Confining ourselves to this view of the subject, we should pronounce that native American unworthy of his parentage and the name which he bears, who would not revere the words of his father, uttered under such circumstances. Nay, that man, let him be who he will, and let his circumstances be what they may, is unworthy to tread American soil and breathe American air, who does not cheerfully and sincerely adopt the words of my text, as containing the sentiments of his heart, "*All men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.*"

When this declaration, particularly this clause of it, was reported in heaven, (and I presume to believe that the sun had not set on the fourth of July, 1776, before the transactions of the American Congress were published to the celestial hosts,) what think you were the expectations of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, with respect to the state of things which would succeed in this nation? Doubtless, the former, in whose respective ranks *liberty* and *equality* are not only *professed* but *practised*, expected, upon their first mission to this lower world, to see the American people, without distinction of complexion or circumstan-

ces, enjoying the blessings of freedom. And with equal probability may we imagine, that those happy souls who had been redeemed from the earth, and who had here witnessed, with their own eyes, the oppressions of man exercised upon his own species ; some of whom had, perhaps, themselves been personally guilty in this matter, and had found, from their own experience, that the last pollution, from which a Saviour's blood can wash the human soul, is the sweat or blood of a black man's body ; I say, we may safely imagine, that, among these, there was one universal shout of joy. They rejoiced to hear, that, in one nation at least of this fallen world, after the lapse of almost 6000 years, THE RIGHTS OF MAN were at last understood, and a solemn resolution to respect them had been unanimously adopted : that universal emancipation had been proclaimed to three millions of the human family.

In view of these considerations, could angels and redeemed souls have reasonably expected or believed, *if there is any sincerity in man*, that from the benefits of this solemn declaration, adopted under all the solemn circumstances just mentioned, and with the most solemn appeal to heaven, *every sixth man* was excluded, and *doomed to perpetual slavery* ; and *that*, for no other reason, than because the God of nature had caused them to be born in a torrid clime, where the sun had burnt their skin and crisped their hair, and they had been transported against their will, to a land inhabited by white men ?

And if the celestial hosts were then restrained from an universal clamour of disapprobation, by the consideration that such an exception was rendered necessary by the existing circumstances of the country, and the impossibility of emancipating 500,000 slaves while our shores were invaded by a foreign foe ; could they have been persuaded to believe, that, after heaven had espoused the cause of America, and God himself had fought her battles, and victory had crowned her arms, the American people would permit almost half a century to roll away in the enjoyment of unexampled liberty, prosperity and happiness, while slavery would be per-

mitted to increase with the increase of their wealth and population? Could they expect that this solemn declaration of Independence would be annually read the 50th time, accompanied with the roar of cannon, the display of banners, and shouts of joy, and that thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars would be expended on every return of this anniversary in feasting and dissipation and tumult, and yet *no year of Jubilee* be proclaimed to the oppressed sons of Africa?

But such is the fact. This day commences the 50th year of freedom to American white men, and yet a million and a half of our fellow men, within our own dwellings, are this moment groaning under the chains of bondage. Tell me not, as it is often told by the advocates of slavery, that they are incapable of providing for themselves; and are therefore happier in their present dependent condition, than if they were immediately emancipated. I cheerfully admit that the little feathered songster that was hatched in a cage or incarcerated before his wings were fledged, may be ignorant of most of the sweets of liberty; and after being long accustomed to have his food provided by his owner's hand, might be incapable of finding it, in equal profusion, in the fields and forests; but does this prove that he has not a nature adapted to the enjoyment of liberty, and equally entitled to the privilege with other birds?

But on this point *reasoning* is needless. I appeal to my text. "*ALL men are created equal*," said our forefathers, "*and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; among these are life, LIBERTY and the pursuit of happiness.*" For the space of fifty years we have been reiterating the same maxim and at the same time declaring that it is "*a self-evident truth.*" Now, I say, let us aim at consistency of character. Let us reduce the principle to practice, and prove to the world that we believe what we say, or blot it out from the declaration of our rights and privileges. We may abhor the tyranny of kings and emperors, and commiserate the degraded state of their oppressed subjects, but a greater incongruity cannot be found in any nation

than that which exists in our own. In one hand we hold the protestation that all men are equal, and entitled to the enjoyment of life and liberty ; and in the other, we firmly grasp the chains of slavery and wield the goads of correction. We proclaim to the world that we are the only nation of freemen on earth, and yet daily practise the most absolute despotism. It is frequently the case that the same publick newspaper which unblushingly asserts the equality of our rights, and the justice of our institutions, advertises a whole village of *human beings for sale*. Again I say, let us aim at **CONSISTENCY** : either acknowledge to the world that we are tyrants and despots, or act according to our professions.

That my text contains a correct assertion, I am not disposed for a moment to question : and I should surely be employed to no purpose in attempting to prove to others, what they have asserted for half a century, to be “a self-evident truth.” If then, all men are, by their birth, entitled to the same natural rights and privileges, they can be divested of them only by the authority of Him who has the power of life and death in his hands. The God of nature has a perfect right to authorize one nation to subjugate another, as he delivered the Canaanites into the hands of Israel. But surely this is no argument in favour of American slavery. When we have found a “*Thus saith the Lord*” for the subjugation of Africans, then, and not till then, shall we have a right to make them our slaves.

A man may also forfeit his liberty, and even his life, by the commission of crimes against the interests of society. And in all such cases, every nation on the globe has a charter from the King of heaven to inflict merited punishment. But surely no man of common sense will pretend that this authorizes any individual or commonwealth to reduce to perpetual bondage, and entail the same on their posterity, those who have never violated a single law of the land.

The time has been when the event of war has been supposed to confer on the victorious party the right of enslaving the vanquished. But this is now universally

acknowledged to be a principle of barbarism, and is abandoned by the civilized world. Where then is our charter for the oppression of our fellow men ?

Perhaps the most plausible argument in support of American slavery, (and it is one that has been newly discovered, for it was first introduced into Congress on the Missouri question,) is, that the New-Testament distinctly recognises without any mark of disapprobation, the relation of masters and servants, and St. Paul in his Epistles explicitly enjoins on the latter the duty of respect, obedience and fidelity. This argument has been triumphantly urged as presenting Divine authority for slavery. But, pray tell me, are there no servants but slaves ? Is there no such thing as the relation of master and servant unless where slavery exists ? If so, tell Great Britain to blot the word from her vocabulary, that it has no meaning in the English language, and is exclusively of American origin and use.

“ But,” says the advocate of slavery, “ this argument is not to be got rid of in this way. This is mere quibbling. St. Paul speaks not only of servants, but of *bond-men* ; and he actually enjoins it on every man to abide in the same calling, or condition, wherein he is called. And he specifies particularly that if any one is called being a *servant*, he is to rest contented with the assurance that he is the Lord’s *free man*. 1 Cor. vii. 20—22. Nay, in his Epistle to Philemon, he had a fair opportunity to put this question at rest for ever ; but instead of rebuking the master for holding slaves, he returned the *runaway* to his service.”\* On this ground, it has been asserted, that those who hold slaves are more obedient to the Scriptures than those who do not.

If I am not greatly mistaken in regard to the nature of this argument, I could prove, in the same way, that tyranny and despotism are approved of God ; and that those who submit to such a kind of government, live in greater conformity to the Scriptures than the citizens of a republick.

The manner in which I would argue is this. St.

\* This whole argument, in all its parts, was once urged with amazing zeal, on the floor of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.

Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God, the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."—Rom. xiii. 1, 2. Now this solemn injunction, under this awful sanction, was imposed by inspiration upon the Christians of Rome, at the time that the crown of that empire was worn by Nero, one of the most cruel and blood-thirsty tyrants that ever disgraced a throne. By his own direction the city was set on fire, which raged for nine successive days, spreading desolation and ruin; and then to furnish himself a pretext for persecuting the Christians, he laid the crime to their charge, and fiercely commenced the bloody work. "Some were wrapped in the skins of wild beasts, and torn in pieces by dogs; some were crucified, and others, clothed in garments covered with pitch, were set on fire; while the cruel monster calmly sat in the window of his palace and enjoyed the scene of his own barbarities." And yet this is the man, whom the apostle commands the Christians to revere as "the minister of God;" the resistance of whom is threatened with damnation. Was not Paul then the advocate of tyranny and oppression? Just as clearly as he was the advocate of slavery.

In the same manner I think it can be shown that polygamy is approved by St. Paul, at least among the Gentiles. He expressly ordained that "a bishop or deacon must be the husband of one wife." 1 Tim. iii. 2, 12. Now the inference is fair, that all other men might have more than one. Private members of the church are not restricted in their inclinations in this respect, only the officers of the church are not indulged. I see no way to avoid this conclusion. How then shall we reconcile these apparent inconsistencies?

In my view, the solution is plain and easy. Upon the first introduction of the gospel into any pagan land, there always will be many evils existing, which are so completely wrought into the customs, interests and institutions of society, that it is impossible to correct them at once. Nay, if it were possible, the sudden re-

volution would instantly produce unspeakable misery. Take, for instance, the last mentioned case : Suppose, in a nation where polygamy is extensively practised, every man could be induced to repudiate all his wives but one ; how many thousands of helpless women and children would be turned on the wide world, without the means of support, exposed to inevitable wretchedness and want ! The sudden adoption of the true Christian principle, under these circumstances, would be productive of vastly greater misery than is now experienced from this horrid pagan practice ; and the Christian religion would be execrated as a system of cruelty.

What then is to be done ? Must Christianity sacrifice its holy principles at the shrine of pagan impurity ? Must we be satisfied to have men embrace *the faith of the gospel*, while they retain their own *ungodly practices* ? No ! But wisdom is profitable to direct.— Some method must be adopted by which these deeply-rooted evils may be branded with disgrace, and thus gradually but effectually eradicated. For this purpose St. Paul, or rather the Holy Spirit, ordained in those countries where polygamy was common, that “a bishop or deacon must be the husband of one wife.” A man that sincerely embraced the gospel, might be admitted to the privileges of the church without first turning half a dozen women out of doors ; but he never could arise to any dignity, or be capable of holding any office in the church. Now you plainly perceive that the necessary operation of this simple regulation, was to abolish gradually, but effectually, this vile practice ; not however, by sovereign authority or absolute force, but by the voluntary consent of the party concerned.

Thus it appears to be the genius of the gospel to tolerate an evil for a while, where the immediate and total abolition would be productive of greater miseries and crimes ; while, at the same time, it requires the use of all prudent and effectual measures for its ultimate extirpation.

I humbly conceive that it is on this ground alone, that the Scriptures, in certain cases, allude to despotism, slavery and many other evils without a distinct ex-

pression of disapprobation. Had the evangelists and apostles explicitly denounced the tyranny of Rome, and declared that slavery was contrary to the law of nature, and the law of God, they would have been instantly slain, or driven, at the point of the sword, from every province of the Roman empire.

On this account every argument founded on such texts of Scripture in support of slavery, is of no more weight than the dust of the balance.

That slavery is an evil is generally acknowledged in those parts of our country where the least of it exists; and of course, where the most of its horrors are unknown. And there are undoubtedly many in the slave-holding states who deplore the evil, and would gladly remove it, if there was no obstacle in the way. But it is a matter of deep regret that there are thousands of our countrymen, claiming the style of republicans, who are the unblushing advocates of slavery. And what is worse than all, and what renders the extirpation of this evil the more hopeless, is, that when our northern citizens remove to the south, many of them become not only the owners of slaves, but in many instances, the warmest advocates of the principle of slavery. This amazing change in sentiment and feeling, I am unwilling to ascribe so much to what is often alleged, that they find the evils of slavery far less than they expected, and the subjects of it contented and happy; as to the fact, that familiarity with any vice blinds the human mind to its enormity. I doubt not that the most enthusiastick republican of our country, if he found it for his interest to reside under the most despotic government of Europe, would, after a number of years, return with the report, that the subjects of that country were much better contented, and vastly more happy than he had anticipated; and it would not be strange if his zeal for democracy, and hatred of monarchy were equally diminished. But this would never prove to me, that the subjects of a despotism are as happy as they would be, if they were placed in a situation, and prepared, to enjoy the blessings of a free government.

That this is the true reason of this change, I

think is evident from the fact, that our northern men, after they become familiar with slavery, can calmly indulge themselves in that kind of treatment of slaves, which would previously have made them shudder. In this connexion I will mention *a fact*, which for the credit of New-England, and the honour of religion, I would gladly conceal to the judgment day, if the circumstances of the case had not been publicly displayed through this region of country. Two years ago a native of Vermont, and a minister of the gospel too, who has resided some years at the South, passed with his family, through this town and put up for the night within the sound of my voice where I now stand. They were attended by a servant-girl, who was not permitted to eat at a table or sleep on a bed, though in the true spirit of northern feeling, both were kindly proffered by the landlady. She spent her night on the naked floor, with no other pillow than her bundle of clothes; and set out in the morning in an open waggon, to endure the heat of a summer's sun, with no other covering for her head than the woolly fleece which nature gave. Such kind of treatment, for aught I know, may be deemed necessary at the south, as I understood, it was then alleged, to keep the blacks from being "*exalted above measure*;" yet surely it cannot be witnessed, without sentiments of indignation, in a northern clime. And for the honour of humanity, to say nothing of the gospel ministry, I pray God, that my own eyes may never again witness a similar scene.

But let the plea be reiterated as often as it may, that the slavery which exists in our country is not so appalling as northern men suppose; it is still an evil, that exists contrary to the law of nature and nature's God, and in the face too, of American rights and privileges. And beyond this, it stands necessarily connected with other evils, which are more shocking to the feelings of humanity, than slavery itself. Take for example, these simple facts. By the laws of some of the slaveholding states, no man can emancipate his own slaves; and any person is liable to the barbarous and disgraceful punishment of being *whipped on the naked back*, if convicted of *teaching a slave to read*. / Thus

the poor Africans are not only deprived of their liberty, but are completely cut off from almost the only means of information, with respect to their duty to God and their fellow men, and of preparation for the eternal world ; of the only means that can alleviate their sorrows and enliven their solitude. By these laws, a pious and benevolent master, who has inherited a hundred slaves, and who would gladly deliver them from bondage, or, at least, alleviate, by every means in his power, the miseries of their condition, is compelled, against every feeling of his heart, not only to hold them in servitude, but to keep them in absolute ignorance.

Although these laws are founded neither in humanity, nor Christianity, yet evidently in *good policy* ; and they are necessarily connected with slavery, in the extent to which it exists. The physical power of the black population, in many districts of our country, bears such an alarming proportion to that of the whites, that nothing is wanting on their part but information, to enable them to assert and maintain their rights. Only let them know what they are, and of what they are capable, and in one month's time the Tragedy of St. Domingo would be re-acted on this side of the Gulf-Stream.

By this time, my hearers, I presume you have begun to inquire for the remedy of this “legion of evils :” and some of you may have drawn the conclusion, that nothing short of the immediate and absolute emancipation of all the slaves of our country would satisfy my mind. But this is not the fact. However highly my feelings may be wrought on this subject, they have not got the better of my understanding. I am perfectly satisfied that it is one of those evils which cannot be removed by a single stroke. The immediate emancipation of all the slaves, would doubtless be attended with consequences, both upon themselves and the whites, vastly more terrible and distressing, than all the horrors of slavery. And if St. Paul himself were now on earth, and consulted on the subject, I doubt not he would disapprove of such a measure. It has been already shown that there are evils existing in the pagan world, which are directly opposed to Christianity ; and

yet the genius of the gospel, upon its first introduction, does not demand their immediate and entire abolition. And although this country is not strictly speaking a pagan country, yet the practice in question is a pagan practice; and so effectually wrought into the habits and feelings and institutions of our land, that its complete extirpation must necessarily be the work of time.—But here let it be particularly observed, that, in all such cases, we have no licence for the toleration of any sinful custom, a single moment, without the adoption of wise and prudent measures calculated ultimately to abolish it.

This, it appears to me, is the only course that can be adopted in this country for the annihilation of slavery; and in this point of view, I introduce to your notice, the object and operations of the "*American Colonization Society.*"

This association was formed, at the city of Washington, in the beginning of the year 1817; and is patronized by many of the most distinguished officers of the general government. The Chief Justice of the United States has been, from its first formation, the president of the Society. Its object is the transportation to Africa of the free people of colour, who are willing to go, and the establishment of them in a colony, or colonies, under all the advantages of civil and religious privileges. Though its incipient measures were attended with some adverse providences, yet it has progressed with as much success, and with as flattering prospects as could possibly have been anticipated. A district of fertile territory on the Western Coast of Africa has been purchased of the natives, and a flourishing colony planted there, under the direction and control of resident agents. Schools are organized, and the means of grace established among them. The plan has been countenanced, though not explicitly approved, by the government of our country; and it has been distinctly recommended by the supreme judicatories of several of the most numerous and respectable denominations of Christians to the patronage of their members, especially on this interesting occasion.

As this Society, since its organization, has met

with considerable opposition, I feel it to be my duty to present a few considerations in support of its claims.

If the slaves of our country are ever to enjoy all the blessings of freedom, it must evidently be, in a state of total separation from the white population. Such are the present feelings of our citizens, and so firmly are they fixed in their breasts, that we need never expect to see the blacks amalgamated with the whites in all the social connexions of life. In what district of our country will the latter become willing to connect themselves with the former in the relations of the domestick circle? What legislature will be willing to admit the negro to equal privileges and powers with the white man, on the floor of the senate chamber? What University will hold forth the same advantages and honours to our own children and the descendants of Africans? But until all these things are realized, if they must live together in the same territory, the negro's mind will for ever be depressed to the dust with a sense of conscious inferiority, and can never aspire to those elevated distinctions of which it is capable. And this is the grand reason of all that present dulness and stupidity, which are frequently adduced, as evidence that negroes are a race of beings but little elevated above the brutal creation. If therefore universal liberty should be proclaimed through our land, and the African race still be permitted to live in the midst of us, disfranchised by our feelings and customs, if not by our laws,\* of the rights of freemen, we have no reason to suppose that they would be essentially improved or benefited by their freedom. It is therefore most palpably manifest, that if our slaves are ever to enjoy all the blessings of liberty, they must not only be liberated from the chains of bondage, but at the same time, be placed in a situation in which they may aspire to all the advantages and distinctions of civilized life.

In some of the states, even where slavery is abolished, the blacks are disfranchised of the rights of citizens. To the eternal disgrace of our own state, the despotic principles of our Constitution have been multiplied instead of being diminished by the late Convention. By the old Constitution, only one class of citizens were divested of certain natural rights without having committed any crime to forfeit them. But by the present Constitution there are two. And the reasons in both cases are very similar; in the one, *wearing a black coat*, and in the other, *a black skin*. But the operation of these regulations is much more oppressive in the latter, than in the former case. The colour of a man's dress depends on his own will; but, "the Ethiopian cannot change his skin," if he would.

This is the immediate object of the Colonization Society. Nor is it a mere matter of doubtful experiment. A similar attempt has long since been made by the British nation, at Sierra Leone, and the result has fully proven to the world, that the minds of black men are as capable as the whites, when placed under equal circumstances of improvement. The same results are beginning to be realized in the infant colony planted by our own countrymen at Cape Mesurado. And nothing is wanting, but the patronage of our own citizens, to extend the same advantages to hundreds and thousands of the degraded and oppressed sons of Africa, who are still in our land.

In further confirmation of the same views, it may be observed, that in the slave-holding states there are many owners of slaves who would gladly emancipate them, but are expressly prohibited. It is impossible, therefore, for them to proclaim "liberty to the captives," unless they can transport them without the limits of the state. What then can such benevolent masters do with their slaves? To turn them out into our western wilds, would be to expose them to certain starvation; or if any survived, they would be hunted down as wild beasts, by a herd of brutal kidnappers, and carried back and sold to less merciful masters than they served before. To transport them to a foreign shore, if any individual were able to incur the expense, without any concert of action, would be to expose them to immediate death by barbarous hands. It is therefore impossible to afford those who are disposed, an opportunity to emancipate their slaves, without such a concert of action as shall protect the colony in its infantile state, till it shall acquire strength and ability to defend itself. Such is the object of the Colonization Society.

Let not this effort of beneficence be paralyzed by the plea, that it is an insignificant undertaking compared with the magnitude of the evil intended to be removed. Did you never see a cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, at its first appearance, finally overspread the whole horizon and pour a copious blessing on the thirsty earth? What plan of benevolence, in this fallen world, was not small at its commencement? Even the

kingdom of God was once like *a grain of mustard seed*; but it has gradually increased and will continue to grow till it fills the world. The Herculean labour of abolishing the slave-trade, with all its bloody horrors, was commenced, within our recollection, by a single individual, in the legislature of a single nation, amidst the clamours of a host of opposition; and yet that individual has lived, and we have lived, to see the horrid traffic proscribed, not only by that nation, but by the civilized world, and the practice declared *piracy* by several nations. What influence then can a consideration of the smallness of the means, compared with the end, have upon the benevolent mind in relation to this subject? It may indeed stimulate to increased exertion, but it surely can produce no discouraging effect.

But even admitting that the efforts of this Society should never ultimately accomplish the object of its aim, *the entire abolition of American slavery*, there is one important result which it cannot fail to produce. Besides securing the blessings of freedom and self-government to some of those who had previously groaned under the chains of bitter servitude, it will afford a ready introduction of the blessings of civilization and the gospel to the benighted tribes of Africa. It is recorded in God's sure word of prophecy, that "Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands to God," while "the isles of the sea shall wait for his law." In view of the numerous and simultaneous efforts of the Christian world to extend the blessings of the gospel to the ends of the earth, we may justly consider the exertions of the American Colonization Society as ultimately, though not directly, aiming at the same object; and we may with propriety regard the Institution as one important wheel in that vast system of moral machinery which, under the blessing of heaven, is destined to regenerate a fallen world.

In this view of the subject, I cannot but indulge in what some may call the flights of fancy, but what I fondly persuade myself is the reality of vision. O Africa, long oppressed and degraded Africa! Heaven has witnessed thy bittersufferings, and the long black catalogue of thy wrongs is laid up in store against the day of retribution. But I see the Sun of righteousness arising upon

thee, with healing in his wings. I see the shades of more than Egyptian darkness dispelled by his resplendent rays. I see thy wounds, which have been bleeding for ages, instantly staunched and healed. I see the ferocity of the tyger exchanged for the meekness of the lamb. I hear thy groves and plains resounding with the shouts of joy and gladness, and the still sweeter song of redeeming grace and love. I see "thy wildernesses and solitary places made glad, and thy desert rejoicing and blossoming as the rose. Thy parched ground has become a pool, and thy thirsty land springs of water. In the habitation of dragons, where each lay, there is grass with reeds and rushes. And a high way is there, and a way that is called the Way of Holiness: the unclean shall not pass over it: but it shall be for thee; the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness; *and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*" Isaiah xxxv. 1—10. These blessed results I see effected by the instrumentality of America, the author of all thy wrongs. And though thy sweat and tears and blood have, for ages, been crying to heaven from the ground, for vengeance on her devoted head; yet now I hear thy voice, in the true spirit of gospel forgiveness, intreating pardon for thy guilty murderers. "O remember not against them their *former* iniquities." I see a tide of pious joy and gratitude, flowing from thy streaming eyes, sufficient, if aught but a Saviour's blood were sufficient, to wash away their crimson stains. O happy, happy land, once wretched and forlorn! Thy mother's children shall no longer be angry with thee, because thou art black, because the sun hath looked upon thee—they shall no longer make thee keeper of their vineyards, while thine own vineyard lies waste. Thy complexion is indeed black, but comely; and thy soul has been washed in the fountain of redeeming grace, as white and as pure as the redeemed of any other clime; and thou canst now chaunt as high a note of praise to the

God of thy salvation ; and though here thou hast been excluded from the rights of freemen, and the society of white men, yet in heaven thou shalt mingle, without discrimination, among the blood-bought throng, and there occupy as high a throne, and wear as bright a crown.

In urging the claims of this subject, it is necessary that I should obviate an objection which is frequently made in this section of the country. It is said that "this is a matter in which we have no concern at all—that it belongs exclusively to the southern states." If this plea were founded in fact, are we willing to admit, that the citizens of the northern states are so selfish, that they have no sympathy for the sufferings of humanity, if they are only out of sight ? But I am bold to assert that this objection is utterly groundless ; and that there is not a single native or naturalized citizen in the United States but is verily guilty in this matter. It is a well known fact, that in every original state in the union, excepting one, slavery has been sanctioned ; and that it still exists, to a greater or less extent, in all the states and territories with the exception of five. Now it is useless for a man to plead *not guilty* to the charge of murder, because he has taken the life of only one individual, while others may have slain their thousands. It is the *principle* we are concerned with, and the principle of slavery has been as firmly sanctioned in most of the northern states, as in any part of the union ; though our citizens have never found it for their interest to carry it as far. But for this single circumstance, I presume every farm in this region would now be cultivated by the labour, and watered by the sweat of negroes. With what an ill grace then can any, who have implicitly or explicitly sworn allegiance to the institutions of their respective states and the general government, especially those who have been, or still are the owners of human flesh and blood, hold up their heads and say, "We are pure from the blood of Africans?"

But, my hearers, I have not yet presented this subject in the light of its most appalling darkness ; nor applied the sharpest point of its universal bearing. *The*

union of these States was originally purchased at the price of the blood and groans of Africa ; and all our citizens from the north and the south, from the east and the west, gave their consent to the bargain. One section of the constitution of the United States was written, like the laws of Draco, in lines of blood ; the blood of Africans.\* By it, all the horrors of the slave trade, the whole root and stock and branch of which slavery is the bitter fruit, were firmly sanctioned for thirty tedious years. During this gloomy period, under the sanction of the charter of freemen, and of freemen too, who, in the days of their emancipation from the chains of despotism, appealed to heaven for the sincerity of their intentions, while they declared to the world "that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with an unalienable right to life, *liberty* and the pursuit of happiness ;" under the sanction of such a charter, adopted by such men, and under such circumstances, thousands and tens of thousands of harmless Africans, who were born free as the air of heaven, or the streams of the fountain, were forcibly dragged from their native shores, bound with massy chains, crowded into the filthy hold of a floating dungeon, without power to rise or room to stand ; and when multitudes had been swept off by wasting pestilence, and found a watery grave, the wretched remnant, emaciated with famine and worn down with disease, were sold under the hammer into perpetual bondage. Without the sanction of all these horrors, the union of these states would never have been effected. And in consenting to this measure, the northern states became voluntarily partakers with those of the south, in all the guilt of the barbarous slave-trade and all its horrid consequences.

O my country ! what atonement canst thou make for such bloody crimes ? What fountain, but that which flows from Calvary, can wash away thy crimson stains ? In vain wouldest thou offer "many thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil. The blood of thy first-born would not expiate thy transgression, nor the fruit of thy body, the sin of thy soul." Mic. vi. 7. "Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet

\* Article I. Sec. 9.

thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God." Jer. ii. 22. I beseech thee, do not aggravate thy guilt; and provoke anew the wrath of heaven, by justifying thy deeds or pleading innocent of the charge. "For thy sin is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond; it is graven on the table of thy heart, and" if not "upon the horns of thy altars," it is inscribed in the archives of thy cabinet, and whilst thy children shall read the legacies of their fathers they shall remember and bear witness of thy crimes, to the latest posterity. Fly, O fly, in the first place, to the fountain of a Saviour's bleeding veins, and there be washed from all thy pollution: and then, as a testimony of thy gratitude, that much, very much is forgiven thee, summon all thy energies to repair the injuries thou hast done. "Proclaim liberty to thy captives; say to the prisoners, go forth; and to them that are in darkness, show yourselves." Isa. xlix. 9. Restore them to "the land of their fathers' sepulchres," and let them once more peacefully enjoy the inheritance of their ancestors. Wherever they may have been born, Africa is their home. Though transported to the most distant countries, and situated in the most temperate regions of the globe, and transmitted through a series of generations, they still retain in the constitution of their frames, and on the whole surface of their bodies, the title of heaven to those torrid climes. The God of nature has evidently determined, that they shall never be divested of their original inheritance. Though "the descendants of Cush can never change their skin," yet the time will come when their souls shall be made white in the blood of the Lamb; and then, in their own land, which God allotted to their progenitor, they shall stretch forth their hands to God, and under their own vine and fig-tree enjoy the fruit of their labours, without any to molest or make them afraid.

There is one consideration more, by which I would urge the claims of this subject. If the people of the United States cannot be extensively aroused to undertake the redress of African wrongs, from motives of humanity, and a sense of duty, the apprehension of personal danger may with propriety be awakened in their

minds. God deals with nations, in this world, on a different principle from what he deals with individuals.— The wicked man is often permitted to prosper in his sins, and to die without pain ; because the righteous retributions of justice await him in the eternal world.— But wicked nations exist, in their national capacity, only in this life. Therefore, if national sins are ever visited with the indignation of heaven, it must be in the present world. Hence, we may draw the conclusion, that if American slavery is offensive to God, the judgments of heaven are now impending over this guilty nation. And in what form they will descend, we need not the spirit of prophecy to prognosticate. In several of the slave-holding states, the black population is already nearly equal to the white ; and the ratio of increase is so much in their favour, that, in the course of a few years, they will be far the most numerous. During the period of ten years intervening between the last United States' census and the preceding, the following was the ratio of increase in several states :

In Kentucky, the blacks increased 57 per cent, whites only 37 per cent.
Tennessee,    -    -    -    80    -    -    57
Georgia,    -    -    -    40    -    -    30
North-Carolina,    -    -    22    -    -    11
South-Carolina,    -    -    26    -    -    8

And in Louisiana as early as 1810 there were 5 blacks to every four white men.

It is obvious, that, at this rate, in the course of a few years, those districts of our country will be covered with a black population ; in comparison with which, the whites will appear as grasshoppers before them. Now I ask, in such a state of things, what can hinder the blacks from arising, and after avenging all their wrongs, by slaying their opposers, taking possession of those very lands as the reward of their own and their fathers' labours ? Do you say, their minds are incapable of such an enterprize ? Look at St. Domingo ; what has been effected there by the African race, in as ignorant and degraded a state as is anywhere witnessed in our own country ! And what will our blacks need, but a few resolute spirits to concentrate their efforts and direct their energies ? And if the genius of negroes is so far debased in our own country, that nature cannot produce them here, they can easily be furnished from the kingdom of Hayti. Though that little empire is now at peace with us and the world, yet black men have always a peculiar sympathy for their own colour. Besides this, many of our own free blacks have already gone, and many more will still go to that island, to enjoy all the blessings of liberty, civilization and science ; leaving many of their brothers and children and connexions in bondage among us.— And do you think that a black man's memory is so treacherous, or his heart so callous, that he can forget, or not feel for the wrongs of his own flesh and blood ? Depend upon it, my hearers, on the shore of that

sea-beaten isle, many a champion will stand, and while he looks to the north and rejoices in the privileges which he is permitted to enjoy, he will long to impart them to those he has left behind ; and if nothing is done, on your part, to redress the wrongs of Africa, before you are aware, the alarm of war, the din of arms, and the rage of conflagration will have laid in ruins the fairest portions of our land.\*

Do I hear the inhabitants of the north say, " If such events should be realized, the desolation will not come nigh us ; and we will not interfere to avenge the slaughter of slave-holders !" And are you then prepared to perjure yourselves ? You have sworn to maintain the union of these states, at the price of your treasures and your lives ; and are you now meditating treason and rebellion in your hearts ? You have become a party to the guilt of slavery, and will you desert your friends when the contract on the part of heaven is to be fulfilled ?

But if you are verily guilty in this matter, do not imagine that you can evade the punishment of such a crime. It is the righteous God of heaven that pleads the cause of the oppressed : and, though the scene of battle may not be laid at your doors ; though the fiercest wrath may be poured out upon those portions of our country where slavery has existed in its most extensive and cruel forms ; yet the hand of justice will, in some way or other, mete out to every district the full tale of its desert. Let us hear no more then of *local* jealousies and feelings, but as the sin has involved us in a *common guilt*, let us aim at a common and timely expiation. The path of *present duty* lies open before us, and it is only by diligent and faithful perseverance therein, that we can expect to escape the indignation of heaven.

This is a concern in which every citizen of the country is interested ; whether he is now or ever has been a slave-holder or not : and there is something for every one to do. The sympathies of every heart must be aroused ; the patronage of every purse must be secured in favour of these incipient measures to remedy the evil ; publick attention must not only be aroused by an occasional effusion, but be kept awake by frequent communications ; the general government must be convinced that it is not enough to countenance, they must approve and aid this humane undertaking—that the fountain of guilt springs from the foundation of our Capitol, and that the principal remedy must be applied there ; our state legislatures must be made to feel that they also have imbrued their hands in African blood, and that not a moment is to be lost in washing away the stain. Every motive that can interest the philanthropist, the patriot, the Christian and the Christian Missionary is presented in this subject, and he that can be insensible of its influence is unworthy to occupy a place in human society, unless in the capacity of " a servant of servants."

May the voice of timely warning arouse us, before the sword of sleepless justice smite our souls.

\* If any are disposed to style this mere conjecture, be it so : but it is no more than what has already occurred, and may occur again. The revolution in St. Domingo originated in France, and was planned by a Society called *Amis de Noirs*, or Friends of the Blacks, organized in Paris for the express purpose of aiding the negroes in recovering their liberty ; of which La Fayette and other distinguished citizens were the patrons. And the first individual that drew his sword, was a mulatto who had been educated in Paris, and sent to his native isle to deliver his coloured brethren from bondage.



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